Deficit in Cereal Production

912. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the deficit of cereals in India has been increasing;

(b) whether its drain on the foreign exchange resources of the country has been augmenting;

(c) if the trend is not arrested, whether this deficit may increase to alarming proportions i.e. 115 M Ton by the year 2020; and

(d) if so, what are the steps Government have taken or propose to take to solve this problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SBPBK SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) No, Sir.

(b) India has emerged as net exporter of foodgrains in recent years even though there are some years when some foodgrains are imported to build up stocks for Public Distribution System (PDS). India exported over 4 million tonnes of non-basmati rice in 1998-99 and is currently holding a surplus stock of over 10 million tonnes in wheat. Import and simultaneous export of a commodity is regarded as a healthy sign as long as such imports are marginal. India has adequate foreign exchange reserves and therefore meeting such marginal shortfalls through imports, is not a problem.

(c) As per the estimates of Planning Commission, as against the projected production of 307.45 million tonnes, the consumption of cereals is likely to be around 268.63 million tonnes in 2011-12.

(d) At present, Central Sponsored Scheme of Integrated Cereal Development Programmes in Rice/Wheat/Coarse Cereals Based Cropping Systems Areas, are being implemented to increase the production and productivity of cereals in the country. Besides this, Central Sector Scheme of Minikits Programme of Rice, Wheat and Millets are also implemented in order to cover larger area under locations specific high yielding varieties of cereals.